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Congressional Progressive Caucus

<http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov>

75 Strong and Growing: Open to New and Different Ideas

January 20, 2011

President Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write to send you our best wishes as you approach your historic State of the Union address. We respectfully request a meeting prior to that address to discuss the critical issue of Social Security and the progressive agenda for the 112th Congress. You have a unique opportunity to set forth a framework of democratic values and to call for protecting Social Security for generations to come. Social Security is a promise to every American: If you pay into the system, you earn the right to guaranteed benefits during your retirement. As members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, we stand with you and urge you to reaffirm your support for guaranteed Social Security for America's seniors.

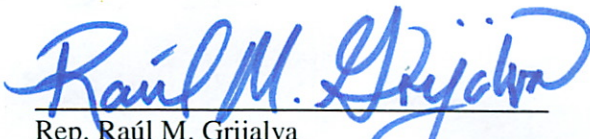
As you know, Congressional Republicans have long targeted Social Security for privatization. They have invented a Social Security "crisis" myth to promote their radical schemes to dismantle the cornerstone of retirement security for millions of Americans. Social Security, along with Medicare and Medicaid, are often what enable our parents and grandparents to maintain a decent standard of living. Social Security benefits are modest, averaging less than \$13,000 a year, but they are vital to the vast majority of Americans who receive them.

The truth is that there is no Social Security crisis. The program currently has a \$2.6 trillion surplus and, without any action, can pay full benefits until 2037 and at least 75 percent of all benefits thereafter. Social Security is funded separately from the general treasury and has no borrowing authority, and therefore does not contribute to the federal deficit. Despite this, many Republicans are using our nation's current fiscal problems to attempt to slash Social Security benefits, raise the retirement age and renew their push to privatize our seniors' security.

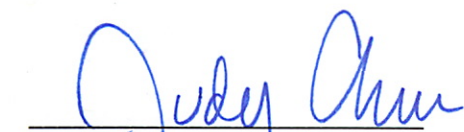
We believe that cutting Social Security benefits, beyond the already scheduled increase in the retirement age from 65 to 67, will create even greater hardship for our most vulnerable citizens. This is especially true in the face of an economic downturn that wiped out trillions of dollars in retirement security for millions of Americans, and must be considered in the context of the ongoing dismantling of private and public pension systems.

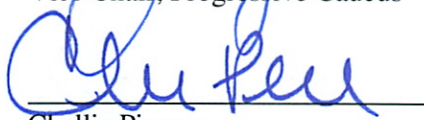
The promise of Social Security is one that we must keep. We urge you to send a clear message in your State of Union Address: Hands off Social Security!

Sincerely,



Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus

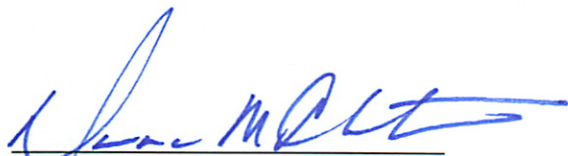

Rep. Keith Ellison
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus


Judy Chu
Vice Chair, Progressive Caucus

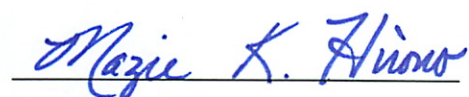

Chellie Pingree
Vice Chair, Progressive Caucus

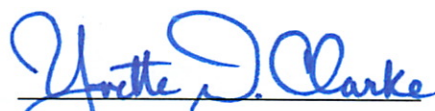

Sheila Jackson Lee
Vice Chair, Progressive Caucus

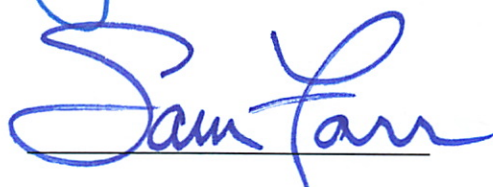

Hank Johnson
Whip, Progressive Caucus



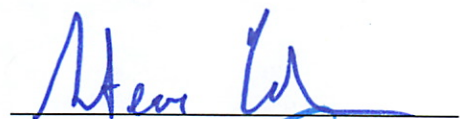




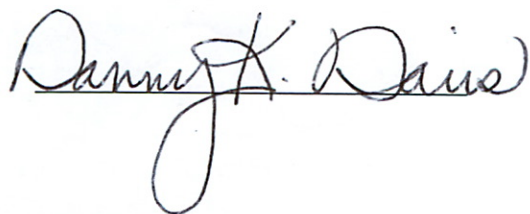


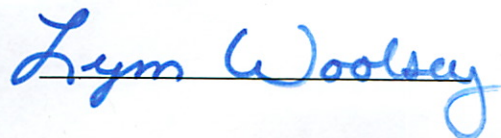


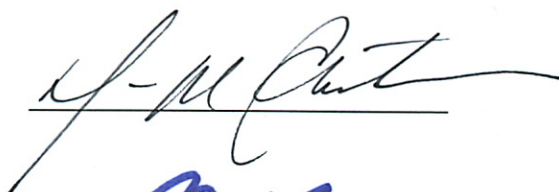




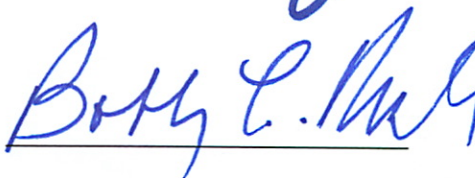


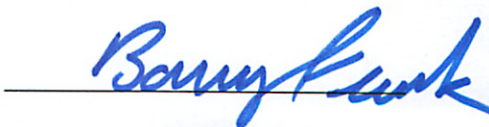












Corrine Brown

Lucille Royal Allard

John Schaefer

Dennis J. Kucinski

Bob Filner

Reuel Bockstein

John Lewis

Barbara Lee

Marcy Kaptur

Jerold Nadler

Candice B. McLean

Elijah E. Cummings

Donna F. Edwards

Signatories

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Rep. Andre Carson
Rep. Donna Christensen
Rep. Judy Chu
Rep. Yvette Clarke
Rep. Steve Cohen
Rep. Elijah Cummings
Rep. Danny Davis
Rep. Peter DeFazio
Rep. Donna Edwards
Rep. Keith Ellison
Rep. Sam Farr
Rep. Bob Filner
Rep. Barney Frank
Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva
Rep. Mazie Hirono
Rep. Michael Honda
Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee
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Rep. Marcy Kaptur
Rep. Dennis Kucinich
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Rep. Carolyn Maloney
Rep. Jim McDermott
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Rep. Laura Richardson
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Rep. Bobby Rush
Rep. Jan Schakowsky
Rep. Lynn Woolsey